



Rooiels Ratepayers' Association / Rooiels Belastingbetalers Vereniging.

Addendum 1

RATIONALE

ROOIELS CONSERVATION PROTECTION OVERLAY - RECOZ

Setting:

South Africa has the most fragile and the least share of intact ecosystems in the world.

Because the Overstrand (and South Africa) relies very heavily on the biodiversity and ecosystem services that underpin the GDP in the Overberg, these systems are particularly vulnerable to further loss¹.

Rooiels is a village that is active in supporting and retaining its natural biodiversity and as such it provides a refuge for plants and animals of the Core of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. It provides a seed store for plants, additional habitat for wildlife and protection of the coastal integrity and marine ecosystems. The result is an aesthetic and societal phenomenon that enhances property values and attracts an increasing number of tourists to the Overstrand. In order to be able to effectively maintain this role of supporting biodiversity and enhancing tourism, it is important that municipal regulations for Rooiels take into consideration the special provisions necessary to avoid over-development, the loss of the natural heritage and alienation of the people from wildlife. This means that there are some aspects for which Rooiels requires a different emphasis in regulations than those of neighbouring more densely settled villages with a higher incidence of alien vegetation and less tolerance for living with wildlife.

The importance of Rooiels as part of the scenic drive attracting tourists to the Overstrand has been recognised by the Overstrand Municipality and Rooiels properties along the R44 have been designated as part of the scenic corridor Heritage Protection Overlay Zone. Other parts of Rooiels also qualify to be incorporated into the Coastal Protection Overlay Zone in cohesion with the Klein Hangklip and the smallholdings which are included in the Buffer Zone Overlay Protection zone.

Two stakeholder workshops took place to test the Rooiels community's views on various village matters the most important being that of sustainable development and conservation. At the Information Cascade meeting in November 2019, all present gave overwhelming support to the proposal that the entire Rooiels be included into a Special Overlay Zone which is Rooiels specific.

After intense debates it was agreed that the HPOZ proposed at that time by OM would be formalized with the provision that Rooiels could continue to work with OM to ensure that a final Rooiels specific HPOZ document, which was the product of countless hours of negotiations with a wide range of role players in Rooiels, be used as a bases for a Rooiels specific HPOZ document. This proposal was presented at the Information Cascade (organised by RERA and REC) to a representative group of stakeholders which included a large number of Rooiels villagers, representatives from CapeNature

¹ A report by [Swiss Re \(2020\)](#) assesses the risks associated with biodiversity loss rates South Africa as one of the countries most at risk of ecosystem collapse

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and the Overstrand Municipality. Thus the Public Participation process was concluded and the outcomes accepted by all present.

Mr. Ruan Kuchar, Senior Manager: Town & Spatial Planning at OM, proposed that the Rooiels community accept the existing HPOZ for initial publication of the Rooiels HPOZ to avoid further delays. He furthermore suggested that negotiations with OM for a Rooiels Specific Overlay be continued in 2020. This ultimate goal was that the entire village be accorded Special Protection Overlay status for Planning purposes.

The name of this Rooiels specific overlay document has since been accepted by roleplayers in the village as the Rooiels Conservation Overlay Zone (RECOZ).

COVID 19 has delayed the negotiations with OM, but RERA has established an Eco-Workgroup (2020) to continue the huge amount of work done last year by previous RERA work groups.

The enthusiasm, passion and very strong support for the proposals presented at the Information Cascades meeting, November 2019, has not wavered.

The Rooiels Conservation Overlay Zone (RECOZ):

Purpose of RECOZ: To establish a special planning overlay that is directed at conserving the natural heritage, biodiversity and ecosystem services that accrue as a result of Rooiels actively promoting and enhancing its natural vegetation and finding ways to reduce human-animal conflict in ways that allow animals to be part of life in Rooiels. Specifically the special overlay is to ensure that any land use application resulting in additional rights complies with the existing character and contextual significance to enhance natural biodiversity and the visual spatial threshold at the point of entry to the Overstrand Municipality and adjacent to the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve.

Reasons for Application for a Special Protection Overlay Zone:

1. Currently the designation of Rooiels HPOZ applies only to the sections that can be seen from the R44 together with all erven along the sea front which are included in the Coastal HPOZ. The residents of Rooiels would like a Special Conservation Protection status for the entire village in order to ensure that we maintain the natural fynbos and the aesthetic and environmental value of this entrance to the Overstrand.

2. The Rooiels Residents' Vision reflects the values articulated in the HPOZ but applies to our entire village. The Vision is also in line with our support for Rooiels to be active as a buffer to the protected area of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. Rooiels is proud of its heritage as a community that lives closely with nature helping to enhance the value of the environment for the future. The residents would like to ensure that it continues this legacy and to this end has also mandated the Rooiels Conservancy and the Rooiels Ratepayers Association to apply to be designated as part of the Buffer zone of the KBR. This application is in process.

3. The sections of Rooiels currently designated as HPOZ are only certain areas that can be seen from the R44. They are so designated because of the important scenic and aesthetic role that the

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corridor plays in the Overstrand economy. However Rooiels in its entirety adds real value to the attraction because of the way it reflects people living in harmony with nature. Most of the village is open and retains indigenous fynbos along the roadsides and many of the Erfes. Wildlife can be seen foraging naturally in the village and visitors to the Overstrand often incorporate a drive through Rooiels as part of their visitor experience. To retain this, we do need all of Rooiels to be incorporated into a special overlay zone for conservation. The rationale that was applied by the Overstrand Municipality, for the designation of parts of Rooiels as an important HPOZ along the scenic corridor, is also relevant to the entire village.

4. In addition to its role in the aesthetics and attraction of the Overstrand, Rooiels also currently plays an important role in mitigating the risks of the loss of biodiversity through climate change. Rooiels still retains much of its natural fynbos and thus acts as a seed bank and also as a host for insects and all animal life. Rooiels is also currently exploring the options of actively engaging in providing opportunities and support for Western Cape universities, including Hermanus, to carry out research on sustainable living in ways that promote natural ecological systems. The importance of climate risk mitigation and adaptation is increasingly recognised as essential to the future in South Africa. Rewilding the urban landscape is an important, although new, initiative in conserving global biodiversity. The experience of Rooiels which implements these principles will provide good exposure for the OM contribution to sustainable living and climate change adaptation.

5. Rooiels with its widespread locally indigenous flora is an important buffer to the neighbouring protected area. Rooiels residents have invested considerable time and money over many years to remove invasive alien plants. What was once a forest of rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*) is now naturally seeded fynbos. This provides habitat and food for insects and animals and the natural areas are an important seedbank. Thus Rooiels helps to sustain the biodiversity of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. If all of Rooiels is part of a special conservation protection zone it will be easier to safeguard the indigenous road reserves, the narrow untarred roads, no pavements and other protection measures. This will help to ensure that Rooiels continues to play its important biodiversity refuge role, retains its natural appeal to visitors entering the Overstrand as well as retaining its character and property values.

6. Rooiels is unique in the Western Cape as a community committed to finding ways of supporting efforts to ensure that the village remains open to wildlife, including baboons. The majority of Rooiels residents take deliberate measures to reduce baboon access to human food. We enjoy seeing them foraging naturally in the abundant fynbos and along the shoreline. This reduces the costs of artificial protection measures of human monitors, fences or other costly interventions to minimise human/baboon conflict. Because they are free to roam the baboons are able to access coastal fynbos which is increasingly limited and is a necessary part of their feeding regimes and of dispersing fynbos seed. This commitment clearly demonstrates the unique attitude of Rooiels towards nature. Ensuring that residents and visitors understand and comply with additional measures to reduce conflict is one of the reasons why it is important that all of Rooiels is included into a Rooiels Conservation Protection Zone (RECPOZ).

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7. The Rooiels residents and the ratepayers association would find it easier to achieve the objectives of the HPOZ and maintain the scenic corridor and ensure compliance, if the same conditions applied to all of Rooiels. Public participation, information sharing and joint decisions would be more easily achieved if the entire village is designated as part of a Conservation Overlay Protection zone that would incorporate the provisions of the existing HPOZ.

8. The above rationale is aligned to paragraph 4.3.6 of the Overstrand Municipality Draft Spatial Development Framework of 2020 which addresses the issue of *Priority Areas for Biodiversity Conservation*. It furthermore complies with the Draft Review: South African Strategy for Man and the Biosphere Programme 2021-2030, UNESCO, as compiled by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries and the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan Handbook-2017.